CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Lower Rural Yellowstone Electric Co-Op to Marla-Hill 4HSU oil well
Proposed Implementation Date:	2013
Proponent:	Lower Rural Yellowstone Electric Co-Op
Location:	T24S R55E S36
County:	Richland

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Lower Rural Yellowstone Electric Co-Op (Henceforth referred to as the proponent) have requested to construct a powerline to run to a oil well on the State Trust land mentioned above. This project would utilize heavy equipment to drill holes for power pole installation and installing wires. This project would be generalized in south central Richland County.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Proponent has submitted the proper documentation for this project
A field review was completed by ELO staff October 21st, 2013.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A- Allow the proponent to build the powerline on state trust land.
Alternative B- No Action

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:
Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Alternative A- With the use of heavy equipment for auguring holes and running wires some soil disturbance may occur. Soils in this area are not unstable or fragile. Any soil disturbance will be minimal and will recover in time.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Alternative A- Water quality will be maintained by excluding access to any area where ground or surface water could potentially be disturbed. All equipment will be kept out of rivers, wetlands, sub irrigated ground or any area where water quality, quantity or distribution could be affected.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

Alternative A- Pollutants and Particulates may be increased during the project. After the completion of the project pollutant and particulate levels should return to normal.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Alternative A- Minimal disturbance to the vegetation community is expected. No rare plant types were located within the construction area. Current plant species which occupy the construction area include Western Wheatgrass (Agropyron Smithii), Green Needlegrass (Stipa Viridula), Needle and Thread (Stipa comata), Prairie Junegrass (Koleria pyramidata), Blue Grama (Bouteloua gracilis), Big Sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata), Silver Sagebrush (Artemisia cana), Fringed Sagewort (Artemisia frigida), Broom Snakeweed (Gutierrezia sarothrae), Downy Brome (Bromus tectorum) and Japanese Brome (Bromus japonicus).

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Alternative A-There may be minimal disruption to the wildlife that inhabits the area. The scale and length of the project should not be enough to permanently disrupt the wildlife species. Species in the area may include Whitetail and Mule Deer, Elk, Antelope, Raptors and other birds, various rodents, rabbits, reptiles and others.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Alternative A- A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Database shows that there are no record of any threatened, endangered, or species of concern on this tract.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

Alternative A- A search of the TLMS database shows that no historical, cultural, or archaeological sites are located on the tract, and nothing was found during the field review by ELO staff.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Alternative A- The aesthetics of the tracts will be slightly impacted with the instillation of an additional powerline as it will be located close to an established county road, and an oil service road; however impacts are expected to be minimal.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

Alternative A- No impacts expected.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

None

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Alternative A- There may be potential safety risks for laborers but the potential risk should be minimal with proper safety efforts.

Alternative B- No Impact Expected

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Alternative A- It has potential to have a positive effect on the agricultural, industrial, and commercial industry and future infrastructure in the area.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

Alternative A- This project does have the potential to create jobs with further developmental possibilities.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Alternative A- Effects of the project may have positive effect on the local and state taxes. The amount is not known at this time.

Alternative B- No Impact

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

Alternative A- No Impact Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected
Alternative B- No Impact

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Alternative A- The project will increase revenue for the state trust in the form of increased oil production from the oil well; Continental Marla-Hill 4 HSU, the increase of revenue is not known at this time.

Alternative B- No Impact

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Spurr Watson	**Date:**	10/30/2013
	Title:	Land Use Specialist		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative A

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The granting of the powerline to access an oil well across state owned trust lands should not result in nor cause significant environmental impacts. The proposed action satisfies the trusts fiduciary mandate and ensures the long term productivity of the land. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	**X**	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Marc Aberg		
	Title:	Lands Program Manager		
Signature:	/s/ Marc Aberg		**Date**:	10/30/2013